

That's because of the wreckage Hurricanes Ivan and Emily left behind in 2004 and last year in Grenada. In a matter of hours Ivan wiped out decades of progress in the Eastern Caribbean state, destroyed the productive base of the economy, took at least a dozen lives and damaged 90 per cent of the country's housing stock, forested areas, watershed and mangroves. In less than a year Emily came along and unfortunately piled on damage on top of damage and put a halt to much of the rebuilding effort after Ivan.

That put Dr. Mitchell and his people in the unenviable position of starting from scratch to rebuild a beautiful country.

Small wonder, then, that when the United Nations was about to launch its international Central Emergency Response Fund last week in New York, the Grenada leader was invited to join UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, at the head table to speak to delegates from around the world about the value of being well prepared in case of a natural disaster and the need for an effective response by the international community to appeals for help.

A key task was to appeal for financial and technical assistance for victims of natural disasters.

Speaking on behalf of Caricom and addressing the high level meeting as a "survivor of an unprecedented catastrophe" the Prime Minister presented a sensible case for small states. "The Caribbean is among the regions in the world most vulnerable to natural disasters," he said. "The survival of our economies is dependent on the frequency and magnitude of these events."

Afterwards, he told us at Carib News that he was worried and nervous about the upcoming hurricane season, which begins in June. His concern for the Caribbean region as a whole, not simply Grenada, wasn't misplaced.

After all, Ivan left a trail of devastation in Jamaica, Haiti, St. Vincent and other islands. The loss of life in Haiti was mind-boggling and tragic. Other hurricanes also affected the Bahamas and the U.S. Last year, Katrina took its lethal high winds and heavy rains to the Gulf Coast of the United States, especially New Orleans and the pitiful sight of tens of thousands of homeless persons, at least 1,000 killed and the Big Easy brought to its knees wouldn't be erased from the memory banks of Americans for decades to come. Add the inept response of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, and the Bush White House to the nightmare and it would become clear why rich and poor countries alike should be petrified about the 2006 hurricane season.

But hurricanes aren't the only cause for despair. Monstrous floods hit Guyana in late 2004 from which it hasn't fully recovered. Some estimates by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC, put the damage in Guyana to approximately 60 percent of its gross domestic product. The floods affected almost two-thirds of the 800,000 plus persons who live there.

Clearly, nations and territories in the region should have learned some important lessons from these tragedies. The first was that they should be prepared for the tragedy long before it occurs. Next, they must have programs in place to respond immediately after the all clear has been given. That was why it was so distressing to hear both Dr. Mitchell and Jeremy Collymore, Coordinator of the Caribbean Emergency Response Agency, CREDERA, express regret that some countries seem to be waiting until the next calamity strikes in order to wake up. That would add to the suffering.

In his speech to the diplomats and other representatives in New York, Dr. Mitchell

expressed the Caribbean's disappointment at the "poor response" to the region's appeals for assistance in the wake of the natural disasters.

"In both cases only a small percentage of the pledges were fulfilled," he said. That's an international scandal, a crying shame. Here were countries and institutions making pledges, lifting people's hopes but failing to live up to their word in times of need and suffering.

## SIKH ACTIVISTS ARRESTED IN PUNJAB

### HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, Sikh activists Kanwarpal Singh Dhami and Dr. Jagjit Singh Chohan were recently arrested by the Indian Government on charges of sedition. Their crime was to speak in support of a sovereign Khalistan. Dr. Chohan also flies the Khalistani flag from his residence. When did free speech become a crime in a democracy?

The Sikh homeland of Khalistan declared itself independent from India on October 7, 1987.

These arrests are a follow-up to the arrests of groups of Sikh activists last year on Republic Day in January and again in June on the anniversary of the Golden Temple for making speeches in support of freedom for Khalistan and raising the flag of Khalistan. These events were led by Dal Khalsa. Recently, Dal Khalsa was put under watch by order of the Chief Minister of Punjab after its leader, Satnam Singh, and the leader of the Shiromani Khalsa Dal, Daljit Singh Bittu, announced that they are joining forces to achieve sovereignty for Khalistan.

Mr. Speaker, these are the kinds of tactics that totalitarian governments use, not democratic ones. A real democracy would not arrest people for making speeches. This is underlined by the fact that, according to the Movement Against State Repression, India admitted to holding 52,268 Sikh political prisoners. Tens of thousands of other minorities are also held as political prisoners, according to Amnesty International. How can such things happen in the world's largest democracy?

The time has come to stand up against India's tyranny. We should end our aid to India, especially since India uses 25 percent of its development budget for nuclear development, and we should stop our trade until all people enjoy basic human rights. And we should declare our support for free and fair plebiscites in Kashmir, as India promised in 1948, in Punjab, Khalistan, in Nagaland, and wherever people are seeking freedom. The essence of democracy is the right of self-determination and that basic right is being denied to minorities in India. The best thing we can do to support stability, freedom, and human dignity in the subcontinent is to stop rewarding the tyrants and throw our full support behind those seeking freedom.

Mr. Speaker, the Council of Khalistan has issued a very good release on the arrests of Dr. Chohan and Mr. Dhami. I would like to insert it in the RECORD at this time. Thank you.

DESIRE FOR KHALISTAN ALIVE AND WELL IN PUNJAB

WASHINGTON, D.C., MAR. 21, 2006.—Slogans of "Khalistan Zindabad" filled the air at the

Holla Mohallah festival in Anandpur Sahib, Punjab, led by Dal Khalsa and the Shiromani Khalsa Dal. The two organizations pledged to unite to liberate the Sikh homeland, Khalistan, which declared itself independent from India on October 7, 1987.

Dal Khalsa, led by Satnam Singh, president of Dal Khalsa, and Daljit Singh Bittu, pledged to "provide a fresh platform for the Sikhs who were depressed with the incompetent and incapable leadership of various factions of the Akali Dal," according to The Telegraph, an Indian newspaper. Satnam Singh said the organizations would reach out to people to involve them in "the struggle to uphold our honor and dignity," the newspaper reported. The Punjab government led by Chief Minister Amarinder Singh has directed the police that both groups be put under watch.

Dal Khalsa has sponsored numerous marches in Punjab in support of a free Khalistan, the Sikh homeland that declared its independence from India on October 7, 1987. It was the organizer of the two events at which Sikhs were arrested for making speeches and raising the Khalistani flag.

History shows that multinational states such as India are doomed to failure. Countries like Austria-Hungary, India's longtime friend the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and others prove this point. India is not one country; it is a polyglot like those countries. It is doomed to break up as they did.

"The uniting of these two organizations is very good for the Sikh nation and its aspirations," said Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan. "The Indian government continues to persecute and kill our Sikh brethren," he said. "Unity is essential for the liberation of Khalistan," he said. "As Professor Darshan Singh, a former Jathedar, said, 'If a Sikh is not for Khalistan, he is not a Sikh.'" Dr. Aulakh noted: "This shows that the drive for freedom is still alive in Punjab," he said. "What kind of democracy watches people for demanding freedom? Why don't they watch the Black Cats who have killed thousands of Sikhs with the protection of the Indian government?" he asked.

The Indian government has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, more than 300,000 Christians since 1948 as well as tens of thousands of Christians throughout the country, over 90,000 Muslims in Kashmir since 1988, 2,000 to 5,000 Muslims in Gujarat, tens of thousands of Muslims elsewhere in India, and tens of thousands of Assamese, Bodos, Dalits, Manipuris, Tamils, and others. An Indian newspaper reported that the police in Gujarat were ordered to stand aside in that massacre and not to get involved, a frightening parallel to the Delhi massacre of Sikhs in 1984. The Indian Supreme Court called the Indian government's murders of Sikhs "worse than a genocide."

Indian police arrested human-rights activist Jaswant Singh Khaira after he exposed their policy of mass cremation of Sikhs, in which over 50,000 Sikhs have been arrested, tortured, and murdered, then their bodies were declared unidentified and secretly cremated. He was murdered in police custody. His body was not given to his family. The police never released the body of former Jathedar of the Akal Takht Gurdev Singh Kaunke after SSP Swaran Singh Ghotna murdered him. No one has been brought to justice for the Khaira kidnapping and murder or for the murder of Jathedar Kaunke. Yet according to a report by the Movement

Against State Repression (MASR), 52,268 Sikhs are being held as political prisoners in India without charge or trial, some since 1984!

Missionary Graham Staines was murdered along with his two sons, ages 8 and 10, by a mob of militant, fundamentalist Hindu nationalists who set fire to the jeep, surrounded it, and chanted "Victory to Hanuman," a Hindu god. None of the people involved has been tried. The persons who have murdered priests, raped nuns, and burned Christian churches have not been charged or tried. The murderers of 2,000 to 5,000 Muslims in Gujarat have never been brought to trial.

"Only in a free Khalistan will the Sikh Nation prosper and get justice," said Dr. Aulakh. "India should act like a democracy and allow a plebiscite on independence for Khalistan and all the nations of South Asia," Dr. Aulakh said. "We must free Khalistan now."

### TRIBUTE TO GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

**HON. THADDEUS G. McCOTTER**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 28, 2006*

Mr. McCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, over the weekend a momentous date passed which merits our observance. Greek Independence Day commemorates and celebrates the 185th anniversary of the Greek people's declaration of independence from the Ottoman Empire on March 25, 1821. From this day, until the Treaty of Constantinople officially recognized Greek independence, the Greek people waged a valiant and victorious struggle for their freedom.

The Ottoman Empire's oppression and occupation of Greece evolved over the course of the 14th and 15th centuries. Yet during these centuries, Greek patriots arose to oppose and overthrow the Ottomans' dominion, and in 1814 emerged the secretly formed Friendly Society, which proved a herald of Hellenic liberty.

Then 7 years later, on March 25, 1821, the Orthodox Metropolitan Germanos of Patras proclaimed a national uprising, and simultaneous uprisings arose throughout Greece. Initially this courageous movement liberated many areas of Greece, but the Ottoman Empire rapidly and ruthlessly responded with innumerable acts of brutality, including the massacre of entire Greek communities.

Such Ottoman barbarism contrasted ill with Greek heroism and inspired many nations and citizens to rally to the Greek cause. Thus, in 1827, the British and French fleets delivered a crushing blow to the Ottoman fleet at Navarino, and in 1828, 10,000 French soldiers landed in the Peloponnese to end the Ottoman scourge of Greece.

It was then, and after the horror of war had ebbed and ended, the Convention of May 11, 1832, recognized Greece as a sovereign state, and, again, the Treaty of Constantinople recognized Greek independence from Ottoman rule in July of 1832.

Thus, Mr. Speaker, it is both fitting and fair for we Americans as a free people to commemorate and celebrate the date of March 25, the date Greece, the Cradle of Democracy, was once again made free.

So, too, Mr. Speaker, let us reflect upon the reality that no treaty, no mere scrap of paper,

could ever accomplish more than to simply state the obviousness of Greek freedom, which has always endured for time immemorial, despite whatever oppression encountered.

Indeed, did not the pen of the British poet and doomed martyr to the cause of Greek independence and freedom, Lord Byron, write a testament to the Greek people's inherent love of liberty when he wrote:

The Sword, the Banner, and the Field, Glory and Greece, around me see! The Spartan, borne upon his shield, Was never more free.

And may Greece, Mr. Speaker, ever be free.

### CHALLENGES FACING CARIBBEAN REGION AS IT FACES INTEGRA- TION

**HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 28, 2006*

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to enter into the RECORD the first part of an eloquent speech made by the Prime Minister of Jamaica, the Honorable P.J. Patterson, March 9 to the Protocolary Session of the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States on the theme of "Caribbean Integration In Emerging Hemispheric Relations".

The Caribbean region is a breathtaking area. The rich people, culture and natural resources make it a jewel of the global community. But as Mr. Patterson outlines in his remarks, more must be done to promote the countries' political and social prosperity. He warns, "Unless we focus in a meaningful way on the intrinsic link between democracy, good governance and international security on the one hand, and development on the other, our goals for peace, stability and political and economic security will always remain elusive." Patterson continues, "We must therefore address the development agenda with the same energy and commitment as we have sought to strengthen the democratic agenda, giving each equal dedication, in order that the benefits of democracy can be widely felt to improve the quality of life for our peoples."

One key to further development, according to Patterson, is integration. "Smaller units operating on their own can no longer be viable counterweights in this rapidly changing world," maintains Patterson. The plight of the people of the Caribbean can only be enhanced through greater national and international commitment in addition to empowerment among national leaders. Not only must Caribbean leaders, "broaden the boundaries of our collaboration beyond the OAS and the United Nations," and look towards the World Trade Organization, as Patterson recommends, but a greater commitment must be made to principles such as education, justice and the rule of law, inclusion, and integrity in order to make the region stronger.

Mr. Speaker, I rise again to strongly support the words spoken by Mr. Patterson in an effort to bring to light challenges facing the region and his proposals for what actions need to take place to secure a brighter future for the Caribbean nations.

### CARIBBEAN INTEGRATION IN EMERGING HEMISPHERIC RELATIONS

#### INTRODUCTION

It was indeed with great pleasure that I accepted the invitation extended by the distin-

guished Secretary General to address this august body. I consider it a distinct honour to be doing so in this prestigious Hall of the Americas. Most importantly, the opportunity afforded me at this time, takes on added significance as it comes at the juncture when I am about to take formal leave from the "field" of active politics. In a few weeks, my involvement in regional and hemispheric developments henceforth will be from the vantage point of the spectator's stands.

As one who has participated in these two processes from very early in my political career, I have been asked to share a few thoughts on my vision for the Caribbean and the Americas, bearing in mind the current global realities and our shared commitment towards advancing the political, economic and social development of this hemisphere.

As such, I propose to focus on the nexus between developments in the regional integration process, particularly within CARICOM, and developments taking place at the hemispheric level. How do I see these two processes coalescing to bring about a partnership that will meet the needs of every member state, regardless of their size or wealth and one that will improve the quality of life for our peoples, our most important assets?

#### THE INTERNATIONAL SCENARIO

In order to fully appreciate where our countries are going, we must first understand the milieu in which they are operating. This will affect the vision we all have for a hemisphere in which we can enjoy peace, stability and prosperity on a sustained basis.

Some sixty years ago when the OAS was created, no one would have thought that we would have experienced such rapid and radical shifts in the international environment, propelled by marked transformations in the global economy. These, together with the emergence of new threats to international peace and security, now challenge the very survival of many of our countries.

As the twin forces of globalisation and liberalization have become more pronounced, new demands were thrust upon the countries of the hemisphere forcing, in varying degrees, modifications to our national objectives and priorities. Increased vulnerabilities to the vagaries of these two phenomena have led to the abandonment of traditional economic policies and the adoption of new models of economic development as we seek to secure a greater space in the world economy and a more participatory role in international economic relations.

There is no doubt that both globalisation and liberalization, especially in the last decade, have been the driving force behind the integration of the global economy. Despite the potential benefits of this process, we have to acknowledge that the long-term survival of many of our countries continues to require adjustment to the new realities of an international environment which has become increasingly hostile and unpredictable.

Notwithstanding improvements in global economic prospects and the potential benefits to be derived there from, we have to admit that inequities still remain, putting a number of countries at economic risk, including those in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The quest for sustainable growth, particularly for small economies, has become even more elusive as traditional support mechanisms are gradually eroded. There continues to be increased pressure to move more rapidly to reciprocal trade rules as we bear the brunt of rising energy prices and the weakness in non-oil commodity prices.

All of these are occurring simultaneously, as investors become increasingly risk averse